

DNH4

OSR
Edition

Part Four of the
Haunting of Hastur Series

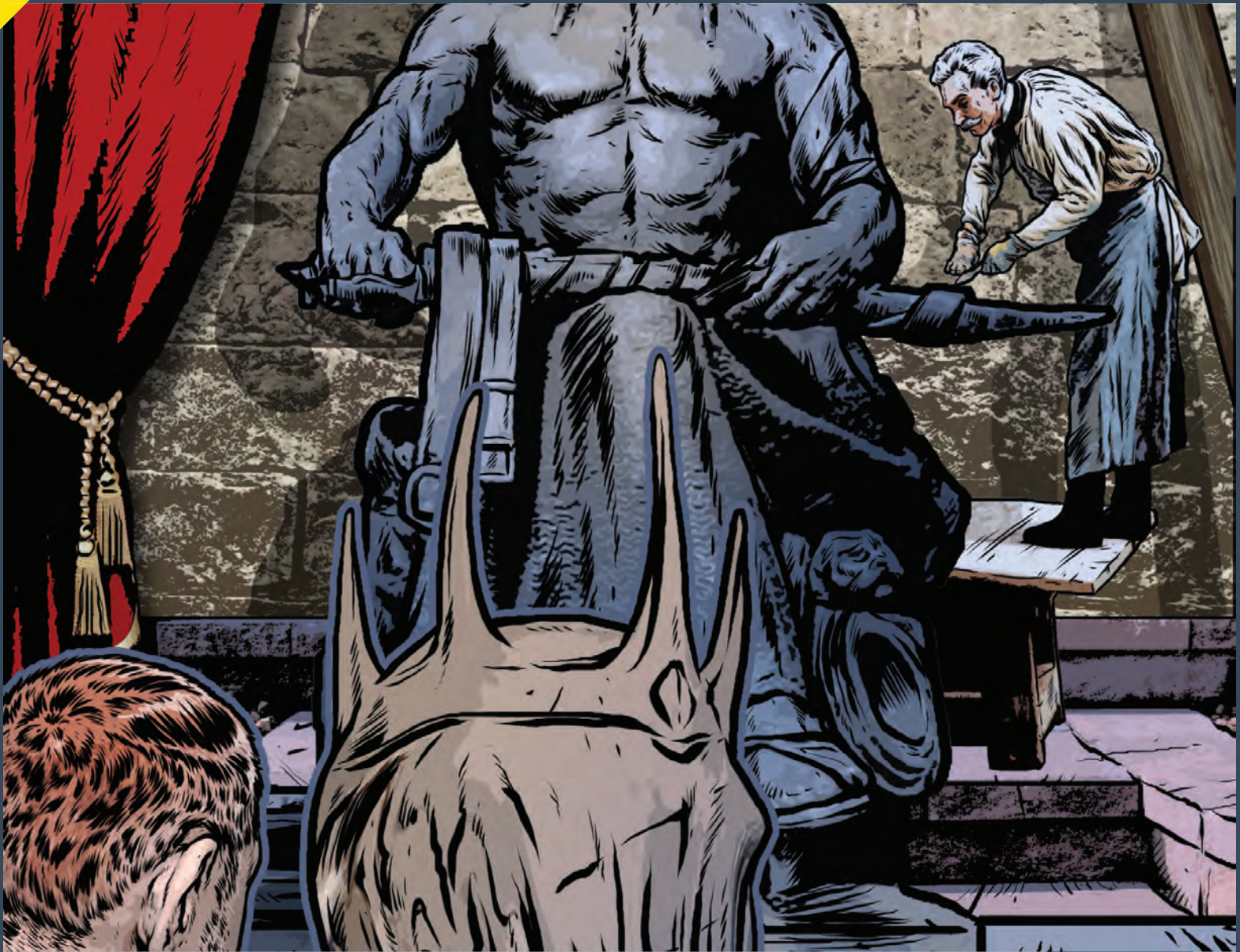
Confronting Hastur

by L. Kevin Watson

An Adventure for Characters Levels 10–11



Compatible



Confronting Hastur is an adventure for 3–7 characters levels 10–11 and designed for use with most versions of the best known fantasy roleplaying game. This Module can be used with any old school RPG or modern clones, and is optimized for 5 characters at level 10.



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DNH4: Confronting Hastur

Dark Naga Adventures

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This module is OSR Compatible and can be used with any old school RPG or modern clone. It was designed with the classic version of the game in mind but with minimal changes can be used with original or advanced rules or their clones. Encounters are listed in the following format:

Orcs (4) – AC 6 (13), HD 1, #AT 1, D 1d6

Armor Class is given both descending and ascending values, with ascending values in parentheses. An unarmored character is AC 9 (10) and chainmail gives AC 5 (14). All encountered creatures use the same saving throws as a fighter of the same level as their hit dice.

Introduction

DNH4 – Confronting Hastur is the fourth adventure in the Haunting of Hastur series. It is set in the city of Meawold and picks up about a year after the events of *DNH3 – The City of Talos*. The party members should be in or near Meawold on other business when they are contacted by Wyatt, a Talos intelligent agent.

Overview of the Adventure

The focus of this adventure is primarily an investigation in the city of Meawold. The characters find not only clues to the endgame, but information about several other subplots they may choose to engage with. The finale is an attack on a temple of Hastur. The temple is being completed as the party members discover it. This part calls for them to defeat Hastur's cultists and destroy their statue before it can be used to draw an aspect of Hastur into the world—an act that would allow Hastur to launch a reign of terror.

Opening

Two openings are presented, one for players new to the Haunting of Hastur series and one for those continuing from the previous adventure, *DNH3 – The City of Talos*. In both cases Talos intelligence agent and master of disguise, Wyatt, contacts the party members and asks them to take over a mission assigned to him that is in need of their skills.

If the party participated in DNH3 – The City of Talos:

Wyatt, a young human, approaches the party. Disguised as a soldier on leave, he whispers, "Talos needs your services again, follow me to the Exalted Bear tavern."

He is an inch shy of six feet tall, slender, but with a round face. His hair is long, dark brown, and pulled back in a bun. He wears ordinary street clothes with a cloak which, when accompanied by a military demeanor and the hood of his cloak up, helps him blend into human cities as a soldier on leave.

Once settled in a quiet corner of the tavern, his military stance is replaced with a stone-cold seriousness unbecoming of a young man, "The cult of Hastur has

How did Wyatt find the party?

He knows their whereabouts from Eglin, who can sense the party's general location, wherever they are, through the magic items Sherin Po-thole gave the party to help them survive the Formene.

risen! They have established a secret temple somewhere in or near Meawold and seek to summon an aspect of Hastur back into the world. They must be stopped! My employer, Eglin of the High Council of Talos, aims to see that they are. If the cult succeeds, Hastur will gain a foothold in Meawold and soon the entire world." He pauses, locking eyes with each party member to gauge reactions, then continues, "I am an observer, and my first task is complete. I have compiled a list of suspected cult members: people who have been acting strangely and or have a means to further such a conspiracy. The second part of my assignment is to find able-bodied adventurers, such as yourselves, capable of stopping the cult. Of course, there is an incentive. If successful, you will all be presented with an invitation to visit Talos again, to be rewarded with treasures commensurate with heroes who saved the world from The King in Yellow. The world needs you!"

If the players agree, read the following.

Wyatt relaxes, his cherubic personality bubbling forth at times while further sharing, "The cult is planning to build, then consecrate, a statue in the likeness of Hastur. The statue will act as a vessel for summoning an aspect of Hastur into the world. They have tried this before and failed. This time, however, they have infiltrated the Court of Meawold. The scryers of Talos have sensed increased attempts to contact Hastur and feel the completion of the statue is imminent."

If pressed as to why Eglin doesn't want to meet in person, he answers, "Time is of the essence!"

Wyatt also provides the party with a letter from Eglin confirming a lot of what he has said. It details the following:

- A cult is indeed attempting to bring an aspect of Hastur into the world (near the city of Meawold).
- They have not succeeded so far, but the planned vessel (statue) is much larger than the last time this was tried (See DNH1).
- Eglin fears that such a large statue so close to Meawold will allow the aspect's aura to ensnare the city in a matter of days.
- Intelligence reports indicate that a member of the Meawold court is directing the affair; however, Duke Bertio, his family, and staff have been cleared of any involvement in the cult.

Wyatt appears to have disregarded the last paragraph of the letter. Duke Bertio rules Meawold. The person in question is a member of his court and moves freely through the upper levels of high society, but the duke, his family, and staff have been excluded from being conspirators. It is part of why his list is long and is something he cannot get his head around.

Wyatt hands over a list of names and tidbits of information on twenty suspects. The characters need to quietly investigate the suspects to confirm or eliminate suspicions of involvement in the cult, find the hidden temple and statue, then neutralize the cult, and of course, destroy the statue (the aspect of Hastur).

If the party is new to the Haunting of Hastur series:

A young soldier (Wyatt) approaches the party members as they are about town tending to their business. He asks one member for news from the North. As he gets closer, his voice softens to a whisper, and the tone changes from a drinking soldier to a man of deep concern. "I have a very important mission for you. The rewards will be incredible. If you accept, ask me to show you to the best ale in town, and I will lead you to the Exalted Bear and explain the job to you."

He is an inch shy of six feet tall, a slender human with a round face. His hair is long, dark brown, and pulled back in a bun. He wears ordinary street clothes with a cloak which, when accompanied by a military demeanor and the hood of his cloak is up, helps him blend into human cities as a soldier on leave.

When settled in a quiet corner of the tavern, he shares, "My name is Wyatt. I work for Eglin of the High Council of the city of Talos." (Talos has been in the public conversation for the last year. People from anywhere in the Five Kingdoms are aware of what Talos is and what it represents for the kingdoms.) His jovial demeanor is soon replaced with a stone-cold seriousness unbecoming of a young man as he continues, "An ancient evil is threatening the land. The cult of Hastur has risen! They have established a secret temple somewhere in or near Meawold and seek to summon an aspect of Hastur back into the world. They must be stopped! My employer aims to see that they are. If the cult succeeds, Hastur will gain a foothold in Meawold and soon the entire world." He pauses, locking eyes with each party member to gauge reactions, "I am an observer, and my first task is complete. I have compiled a list of suspected cult members: people who have been acting strangely and or have a means to further such a conspiracy. The second part of my assignment is to find able-bodied adventurers, such as yourselves, capable of stopping the cult. Of course, there is an incentive. I have been empowered by the leaders of Talos to recruit you and let you know this mission comes with an invitation to visit Talos, something less than ten surface worlds have ever done, and be rewarded with treasures commensurate with heroes who saved the world from The King in Yellow. The world needs you!"

If the players agree, read the following.

Wyatt relaxes, his cherubic personality bubbling forth at times while further sharing, "The cult is planning to build, then consecrate, a statue in the likeness of Hastur.

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Investigating

The list provided by Wyatt comprises twenty people in town who appear to have the means or motivation to be involved in the cult of Hastur. Fifteen are dead ends; the remaining five are prime suspects.

The fifteen dead ends are people who either do not meet the criteria from Eglin's letter (the head of the conspiracy is a member of the court, but not a member of the ruling family) or simply are not involved. These fifteen people include a cross section of the leadership of Meawold and are potential sources of information to further the investigation. The party members should be able to determine through logic, roleplaying a five-minute conversation, or a **CHARISMA** check determine that these suspects are not part of any conspiracy to bring Hastur into the world.

The remaining five suspects are people who clearly warrant further scrutiny. Within a few minutes of investigating, the party members should see these citizens have something to hide. If questioned, these prime suspects will not hesitate to throw wild or accurate rumors at the other four, or anyone else that might distract the party members from their secrets. Details of these individuals and their places of contact are the bulk of the material presented in the following pages.

Wyatt's Intelligence

The Dead Ends – City leaders who have little to hide and can be cleared quickly

(The information after the job title, when present, is a guide to the information the party members will learn when they interview them and includes some direct quotes.)

- Abet Malé (Female) – Court Scribe
- Ancis Rickenn (Male) – Leader of the Smiths' Guild – He has the means, but no interest in any gods.
- Answild Kater (Female) – Captain of the Personal Guards for the Bertio Family – Her loyalty to the family is beyond reproach.
- Anthohn Rowley (Male) – Captain of the City Guard – While a powerful man, his loyalty to Meawold is unwavering.
- Arran Esbyn (Female) – Captain of Customs
- Aten Dyley (Female) – Mistress of Assassins – "In a world run by an Old One, who would be hiring assassins to thin the herd?" Wyatt writes in the margin, "I don't trust assassins, but I see her logic."
- Atrin Pyley (Female) – Leader of the Magic Guild
- Deallu Eryn (Female) – Leader of the Merchants' Guild – Anything without coin as the reward is not on her mind.
- Drichye Gedde (Male) – Smuggler operating under the guise of a very successful privateer
- Gerey Lodge (Male) – Leader of the Inns and Taverns Guild
- Hadrian Boulderdown (Male) – Lead instructor of artificers at the Magic Guild – While he is interested in arcane and esoteric knowledge, he is oblivious to the Old Ones.
- Mary Weselw (Female) – Lead Hospitaler – Found in a military barracks where the top two floors have been converted to a healing and recovery ward. Hospitaler is a specific order of paladin; they focus on healing the wounded, regardless of what side of a conflict they fought. "Insanity is a disease to be conquered, not one to conquer man."

- Phely Gere (Female) – Leader of the Rogues' Guild – The idea of a destroyed world sounds incredibly boring to her.
- Raffolk Dratcley (Male) – Captain of the Wolves of Ovan, a mercenary company – He is too busy managing the clearing of the lands for Meawold to allow access to the Trade Nexus Network to scheme in such a manner.
- Tharder Page (Male) – Captain of the Meawold Keep Guard

The Prime Suspects – City leaders who have something to hide and will need further investigation

- **Beatrix Cornwallis – Owner of a transportation empire**

Cornwallis is probably the single most powerful woman in Meawold. She has a secret that could cost her everything, a shameful secret that could ostracize her from the Court of Meawold. This lead gets deep into an aspect of the politics of the city and kingdom of Meawold: sexual mores.

- **Cassius Stonesworn – Leader of the Martial Training School**

Stonesworn is having an affair with a married woman. Deeper investigation reveals she is gaslighting him into killing her husband. (Torrid affairs, and the like, are ostracizing events in the Meawold social scene, especially in the eyes of those who seem to rule "high society" in and near Meawold.)

- **Fay Commonbok – Owner of a farming empire**

Commonbok's driver has been making suspicious contact with the seedy elements of Meawold, which has drawn attention to his employer, Fay Commonbok. Fay is hiding the fact that she was robbed recently and is working, through her driver, with the thieves' guild to have her necklace returned. Also, her husband was recently asked to assist the book monks with a restoration project.

- **Gavin Montagu – Power broker for smugglers**

Montagu is a former smuggler, now powerbroker, frantic over a duel in the morning he is destined to lose. Through brokering smuggling jobs, he is aware that his new customer, Truegust, has been moving exotic stone and other goods into the city over the last year. Montagu does not know exactly what the goods are.

- **Sadon Truegust – Royal Explorer**

Truegust is the one that is driving the conspiracy. Well, the brain drinker controlling him is driving things. The brain drinker is using Truegust to coordinate information sharing and to bring materials into Meawold, and using another, Monder Balley, to build the temple and prepare the statue to host an aspect of Hastur. The clue to where the temple is built lies in a comment by the brain drinker and a reference to "book monks" from Commonbok.

Cult Temple

The references to the book monks should lead the party to the sublevel of Castle Brytha, the Bertio family home and the seat of power for the city and the kingdom of Meawold. Almost anyone can tell them where the book monks work and all about their operations. These are the people who repair or replace books for the Bertio family library and the Royal Library of Meawold. For parties who played DNH3, it is also the group that makes copies of the books from Talos that Meawold is to distribute to its peers in the Five Kingdoms.

The temple's location is strategic. It is in an excavation of an unused corner of the sublevel of the castle. The aura emitted by the statue will quickly control all the powerful people within the kingdom, and allow Hastur to conquer the kingdom with little resistance.

In addition to entering through the west wing of the ground floor of Castle Brytha, the sublevel of the castle can be discreetly accessed through the chapel on the castle grounds. A trap door covered by the chapel altar connects to a passage that leads to a storage room in the basement of the castle. The basement end is hidden by a large stack of wine tuns, the lowest of which is empty and about seven feet in diameter and depth. Its door swings on a pivot point, allowing two people at a time to enter or exit the secret tunnel.

To enter the temple, another secret door, near the storage room where the tunnel enters the basement, conceals the passage leading down to the new Temple of Hastur.

The Castle Brytha – Sublevel and Cultist Temple section details the temple and identifies the location of twenty-two of the thirty cultists, plus the leader. This leaves eight cultists for the GM to insert where they will challenge the party most, either as wandering encounters or reinforcements.

Conclusion

When the statue is destroyed, the characters are immediately drawn into Carcosa, Hastur's private demi-plane of madness. Once there, they will have an hour to escape before they become part of Carcosa. Escaping Carcosa is the subject of DNH5 – Carcosa.

Experience

For successfully neutralizing the cultists and destroying the statue of Hastur (or more accurately the aspect), characters earn 5,000 experience points each.



Wyatt observing a shady deal. Artist: Henriette Boldt

Investigating the Leads

Stoneworn Petit Manoir

Key Person

Cassius Stoneworn appears on Wyatt's list because he leads a large number of people with fighting skills. Wyatt feels he could potentially recruit cultists from within his school.

He is a fifty-three year old human and still in prime shape. He stands nearly six feet tall and has only just started to slow and have his muscle turn soft in the last year or so. But he was never a brawny brute, so there isn't a lot of excess muscle to turn to flab. His oval face blends into a crowd, but his blue eyes are striking, particularly framed by his silver hair.

Years of being out in the wilds has left his skin tanned, rough, and somewhat leather-like. Cassius was a scout, ranger, and skirmisher for most of his career. His service was highly distinguished and his decorations are many. His knowledge of the wilds is unparalleled. He is the principle explorer in Meawold's discovery of dozens of fallen cities and dungeons.

Cassius is the highest-ranking ranger in the Meawold army and retains his rank as Colonel of the Irregular Services, but since he no longer holds the post, his title was modified to Honorary Colonel of the Irregular Services to avoid confusion with his successor, Anna McCoy. She comes to Cassius, discreetly, for advice from time to time. She is a great leader, and his mentoring is making her greater.

Today, Cassius runs a martial school where scouts, couriers, and rangers practice and sharpen their skills. He takes on many students from other walks of life as well, not just scouts, explorers, and other warriors. (Any class can learn a martial ability or feat from working with Cassius.) His school is quite popular, and a few of his former subordinates work as assistant trainers under him.

He distinctively speaks in a highly formal manner and rolls his R's. This habit was developed over his career as he sought to shake the rural, unsophisticated view that many have of rangers. Over time, he moved his mannerisms from rural to erudite. The rolling R's and formal manner of speech are well known, especially during the last decade of his command, where he spent more time in court than in the field. Some students seek him to learn how to fit into the court of Meawold rather than for sharpening their martial skills.

Cassius constantly looks for the loophole. Those he dislikes he closes or blocks. Those that favor him he protects and rewards. His unlimited access to hot water allows him to indulge in a vice that developed when he moved into court: bathing often, sometimes three or more times per day. Anytime he feels less than fresh, he makes time for a bath. His evening bath often lasts for a couple of hours. Another quirk, one that was not to his advantage in court, is that he takes almost everything at face value, a valuable trait in the field, but not in court where everything has at least two meanings. Additionally, he is an expert gambler. Gambling is the one place where he doesn't take things at face value, and he is quite good at running the table and cleaning out purses.

While Cassius basked in the favor of the duke's court for over a decade, he is clearly an individualist. He has little use for the laws of man, preferring the laws of nature. His alignment tends toward chaotic good.

Ability Scores: STR 14, DEX 16, CON 15, INT 12, WIS 13, CHA 10

Cassius is having an affair with Atrix Pycey, the wife of a merchant. They started their affair a few years after Cassius began attending court. With Cassius gone for nearly thirty years in the field, he lost track of his family. His parents died from a plague that hit the city when he was an only child. He has uncles who moved out of Meawold during the plague, but only one survived it, and he has since passed from age. He mentioned to Atrix that he wished he knew more about his family's affairs while he was out in the wilds for the duchy. She did some digging into his family and was able to reveal quite a bit to him. Five years ago, she added some of her fiction to the family history and started gaslighting him into thinking that he had a cousin, Saewe, who was murdered. Over time, the murderer's description was added, bit by bit, to resemble her husband. The latest clue to the identity of the murderer was that he is missing a finger on his left hand.

Her endgame is to manipulate Cassius to kill her husband, see Cassius hang for the crime, and enjoy her husband's estate without either man in her life.

Minor Person

Atrix Pycey is having an affair with Cassius. Her husband is not aware. Both are discreet. Her husband travels for business half the month. They have no servants, making her nightly dusk walk to his home a relatively simple two-hundred-yard walk between their homes. She spends the night and has breakfast with him before "continuing her morning constitutional" around to the merchants to get a fresh loaf, milk, and any other kitchen needs before returning home for the day.

Reactions to the Party

Cassius Stoneworn

Cassius takes time to warm up to the party. He connects better with martial types than arcane types or rogues. He has a deep respect for divine party members. If asked personal questions before he warms up, his responses will be guarded. Once he warms to the party, his answers are effusive and unrestrained. The GM should have Cassius change the subject until he warms up to the party. Talk of exploration, adventure, or tactics is easiest. Once he opens up to the party, he will mention his desire to find the man who killed his cousin and avenge Saewe.

If asked about the Old Ones, Cassius recalls hearing rumors from the first decade of his career of beings from another plane of existence (pressed, he says the person called it another dimension, and he assumed the speaker meant plane). However, he has no firsthand knowledge of the Old Ones or planar travel. If the party members describe any Old One, particularly Hastur, to Cassius, he will be horrified and will pledge his support the party. However, this support will be more material than martial. His horror is genuine, which can be verified with a Charisma check (or another ability the GM feels is relevant).

If asked about his cousin, Saewe, he will tell the whole tale to the party. He is vague about the person who helped him discover the information about his family. Some of what Cassius says is inconsistent, and in some places self-contradicting. The documentation Atrix provided him is a combination of real information, forgeries, and altered clues. If the party members ask for it, Cassius will provide it. If they search his home somehow, they will discover the bundle of documents.

If the party attacks Cassius, 20 + 1d10 students come to his defense. Six initially attack, and six more will join the fray every three rounds. His manor is adjacent to the training school, within ear shot of the guard, and near the student barracks.

The Pyceys

Walter Pycey will be in town overseeing his lumber business during the first ten days of the adventure. After that, he will head out to visit several timber operations and scout new ones, returning after fourteen days. He is missing the ring finger of his left hand. If asked or confronted about it, he lost the finger years ago when he jammed it in his office and the finger died from being tightly constricted by his wedding band.

Atrix's responses to questions about Old Ones, Cassius's cousin, the affair, or the conspiracy:



Cassius Stoneworn. Artist: Henriette Boldt

If asked about Hastur or any Old Ones, Atrix claims she has never heard of such a thing. There are mortals and gods, but no "Old Ones" in the universe. She is sincere and genuine. No check required.

If asked about the death of Saewe, she recounts the tale she has told Cassius. If confronted with the forgeries and alterations she has generated, she shifts from disbelief at the second piece of evidence to defiant by the fourth, finally becoming hostile when pressed on the matter.

If interrogated, she will reveal under duress that she hatched the plan within a day of meeting Cassius and has been working for years to rid herself of her annoying husband and her sappy patsy in one fell stroke.

For investigating Cassius and helping him solve his issues with Atrix, each party member earns 2,000 experience points.

Stonesworn Petit Manoir

Cassius Stonesworn lives in a small manor house near the training grounds. He has a valet and a cook for his staff. His home is also the quarters of up to ten of his more elite students. The valet and cook put them to work maintaining their rooms and helping prepare and serve meals. Most students study half the day on top of meal breaks and duties assigned by the staff and spend the balance of their day with martial training drills.

Ground Floor

1 – Entrance – The main entrance to the Stonesworn manor house is wide and grand. The room is wider than it is deep, and each of the alcoves created by this width holds a statue. One is of Erwendel, the Lady of Travel. She guards over those who are consistently far from home. The other is Agac, the God of the Earth. He gives the promise of winter, that spring will follow, and with it, renewal. These are the gods Cassius more closely identifies with than the others.

2 – Front Hall – This long hall holds cloak racks and weapon racks, and leads only to the atrium and the study.

3 – Atrium – This large room has a green space about fifty feet wide and thirty feet deep, along with a five-foot outer stone path. Several species of shrubs, grasses, and small trees thrive here. The ceiling is a single slab of glass, created with magic, that sits twenty-five feet above the floor. Ranger students tend to the greenspace daily as part of their nature studies. To make the atrium thrive, a little ranger magic is applied periodically. Cassius uses the greenspace to meditate, and occasionally for a romp in the loam with his lover.

4A – Beast Study – This portion of the study contains pelts, paws, sketches, and scrolls about various beasts of the world. Students often start by studying this material, and later in their careers contribute to the body of knowledge here with new material or corrections. The shelves are stacked floor to ceiling. This body of knowledge is one of the most comprehensive in the kingdom and would be of great interest to the Formene. Other libraries are more specialized. Ranger trainees from other schools often travel here to study for a couple of months. This school has similar privileges at the more specialized collections in the kingdom, although Cassius's students normally visit three or four collections in the time one of the other school's students spend here. The study can be accessed from the front hall, the back hall, or the atrium. Most students come in from the front hall, and use the other hall egress to attend meals.

4B – Nature Study – Like the Beast Study area, this portion of the study contains thousands of leaves, blades, and pressed blossoms in an archive of the kingdom's plant life, both dangerous and beneficial. Additionally, the area contains volumes of sketches of trees and other plants as well as text descriptions of their properties. Students often follow studying the Beast information with Nature information. Also, like the Beast Study, alumni often expand this body of knowledge later in their careers. This collection is much easier to maintain than the Beast Study. It is very rare for a ranger school not to have a collection on par with the one here.

5, 6, 7 – Back Halls – These three halls connect all of the back rooms with the atrium. The east hall connects the library with the dining hall. The north hall connects the guest rooms to the atrium. The west hall connects the staff quarters and Cassius's bedchamber to the atrium.

8 – Formal Dining Room – The dining room can seat Cassius, a special guest, and up to ten students at a single sitting. The student chairs are comfortable but basic. The other two chairs are nicer, almost opulent. Other students dine within their barracks. Guests and students who dine here are usually advanced students or otherwise distinguished. Dining here is the equivalent of dining at an officers' mess or a captain's table.

9 – Kitchen – This kitchen is undersized for the volume of meals prepared here. The cook normally does his work between the cooking fire and the prep table while two students function as minions, fetching dry goods, oils, and other needs on demand.

10, 11, 12, 13 – Guest Rooms – These four rooms hold two or three guests or distinguished students each. They contain comfortable beds, armoires, chests, and dressers for storage. Additionally, they contain a large open space for students to stretch and perform other low impact activities to get warmed up for the day and to soothe aching muscles at the end of the day.

14 – Staff Quarters – The cook and Cassius's valet share this room. Their beds are nicer than the student beds but still inferior to the one Cassius owns. They have an armoire, two dressers, and a chest at the foot of each bed for storage.

15 – Master Bedchamber – This grand room is the bedchamber of Cassius Stonesworn. It is opulent and decadent. The overstuffed chair by the fireplace is custom and expensive. The bed could hold three people and is probably one of the ten most comfortable in Meawold. The chest and armoire are from the same tree, delicately carved, master-craft work. The armoire contains armor; the chest contains day clothes, bed clothes, and some small valuables. Cassius rarely, if ever, uses the door that leads to the atrium. However, his



STONESWORN MANOR

Cartographer: Justin Andrew Mason

lover, Atrix, uses the atrium door to avoid being seen when she visits. She uses the spell **dimension door** to discreetly enter his bedchamber.

She comes to spend the night with Cassius four or five nights a week when her husband is out of town on business. So far no student has seen her. The staff are aware of Cassius having a lover, but do not know who

she is. Her anonymity is a product of their respect for Cassius's privacy and her discretion.

House of Montagu

Key Persons

Gavin Montagu

Gavin Montagu appears on Wyatt's list because he was a very successful smuggler in his prime and today functions as a powerbroker for smugglers and their customers. Wyatt feels he would be aware of exotic goods or materials coming into Meawold.

His 50 years have not been kind to Gavin (human). He stands four feet, ten inches, and is significantly underweight (reflected in his low Constitution). He squints due to failing eyesight. His face kept its sharp, angular aspects, including a mostly grey pencil mustache. His hair is thick, long for a man, wavy, and auburn. Gavin's skin is smooth, moderately pink, and covered in small scars from minor wounds that didn't heal well.

When encountered, he is distracted and impatient with the party members. However, his behavior is a product of anxiety over a duel that he has in the morning. The duel is to the death; he fears he will lose to Narder, who tarnished the memory of Ella, Gavin's wife who died a few years back. Narder implied his wife was unfaithful. Gavin lost his cool and threw a bowl of stew at Narder. This provided Narder with grounds to manipulate the insult into a duel.

Personality Traits

- He doesn't bathe.
- He sporadically quotes his father.
- His alignment tends toward true neutral.
- Ability Scores: STR 7, DEX 14, CON 7, INT 13, WIS 11, CHA 14

Juliana Cartwright

Juliana Cartwright works for Mr. Montagu as his live-in chef. She is not on Wyatt's list, but she also has a secret. Recently, while collecting herbs, she found a map that suggests that it leads to a great treasure.

Juliana is a warm, open woman when not interacting with her fiancé or Mr. Montagu. The former she treats with disrespect, and the latter she treats with business formality. She is slightly plump, attractive, and just immodest enough in her manner of dress to keep Mr. Montagu distracted enough to ignore her Mohawk.

Standing just over five feet tall (human), she has a very muscular figure, emerald eyes, and a sharp but very attractive face. Her fiancé has a

very slight, almost effeminate build. Her Mohawk, dyed black, annoys Mr. Montagu, but her cooking agrees with his fragile stomach too much for him to do anything about her hair.

Personality Traits

- She doesn't worship any god.
- She would rather act than talk or think.
- She takes everything at face-value.
- She is an alcoholic.
- Her alignment tends toward chaotic good.
- Ability Scores: STR 14, DEX 11, CON 12, INT 10, WIS 11, CHA 11

Reactions to Party

Gavin Montagu is evasive and distracted. Most questions are answered with a few, usually polite, variations of "It's none of your business." If pressed, he will eventually state, "I'm a dead man," and becomes less resistant to revealing the story behind the duel and his concerns that he will be killed. As a smuggler, he is not



Gavin Montague. Artist: Z Mann Zilla

opposed to the party discreetly helping him gain an advantage for his upcoming duel.

Narder is a stout fighter and will likely kill Gavin. Gavin is a commoner NPC, while Narder is level three and well equipped. Gavin would do well with light armor and a finesse weapon, but owns chainmail and a longsword. He has a proficiency bonus of +1. There are a number of ways that the party members can help Gavin gain an advantage over Narder. Gavin is open to going along with any that are not obvious to the audience of the duel. This would exclude casting spells or using martial exploits while he is in the duel. However, he will embrace loaned equipment, spells cast before he is seen by the audience, and other boosts that don't risk his reputation.

If asked about exotic materials coming into the city, he avoids giving a straight answer. Getting Gavin to accept help with his duel or a **WISDOM** check will convince him to cooperate with the party. He acts as a buffer between client and operator. The two never meet. He holds payment in escrow, and coordinates collection and delivery of the illicit goods using a variety of stashes and discreet locations about the area. Sadon Truegust has become a customer in the last year and moves crates in and out of the city. The only thing that sticks in Gavin's mind is that he is a new customer.

If asked about his religious affiliations, he declares that he "worships no god or man." His dislike of the gods could cause the party members to feel like he could be a disciple of Hastur who wants to destroy everything in this world. If pressed, Gavin has never heard of the Old Ones or old gods and has no interest.

Juliana Cartwright is giddy and bubbly. She explains her happiness away, saying she is in love and freshly engaged to her man. Juliana enjoys cooking, even the bland food for the infirm Mr. Montagu. She and her fiancé live in the cellar which he has made comfortable for them. The cellar consists of two large rooms, one of which holds her library, sewing gear, and their bedroom.

Her man is henpecked and browbeaten. Any interaction with him will make it clear.

Queries reveal (without a check):

- She proposed to him.
- Something unusual is going on in her relationship with her fiancé.
- She expects to retire as a chef by year's end.

If pressed with follow up questions or a successful **WISDOM** check:

- A map that suggests it points to a great treasure was found by Juliana while looking for herbs.
- The map is old, but not ancient. She hopes the riches discovered via the map will allow her to retire in style.
- She makes her man go out daily to look for the landmarks from the map.
- Her man is henpecked, and she clearly dominates him in all aspects of their relationship.

Investigation of the map will reveal:

- The map's landmarks are within fifty miles of the Batun Mountains, far from Meawold.
- The map was found in a sealed scroll case and is over a thousand years old.
- The map leads to a location that was cleared about six hundred years ago and is currently empty. (Or maybe not, at the GM's discretion.)

If Gavin is attacked, 15 + 3d6 smugglers track down the party members and ambush them.

For investigating Gavin, discovering what Juliana is up to, and helping him solve his issues with Narder, each party member earns 2,000 experience points.



Juliana Cartwright. Artist: Henriette Boldt

Montagu House

Ground Floor

1. Entrance – This grand entrance to the Montagu house is 5 feet deep and 20 feet wide. The ornately carved wood double doors are framed by two lovely stained-glass windows depicting nautical scenes: a ship leaving port for the open sea and a ship navigating the open water. The ship in both windows is the same. The name, *The Star of Hipool*, can be seen on the aft of the ship in the glass window where the boat is leaving port.

2. Foyer – A plush rug welcomes entrants to this large room that could easily hold a formal dance for 20–30 people. The center of the floor is laid in a pattern of hexagons and slightly raised. The east and west walls are lined with stools. There is an open passage in the west wall, a pair of doors leading east, and a double door leading north framed by two copies of the Montagu family seal (twin daggers over a bag of gold). The Montagu's have been rogues, smugglers, and assassins for generations.

3. Library – Bookcases line three walls of this room and are filled with books that mostly concern maps, nautical topics, and political matters, the tools of the trade for a smuggler. The books are worth an average of 20 gp each. A large table and four chairs fill the middle of the room, and a reading lectern occupies the northwest corner. Windows look out upon the river and the merchant docks.

4. Downstairs Office – This office, used by Gavin for conducting meetings, holds a table with three chairs, a desk flanked by chests along the north wall, and a bookcase beside a small chest on the west wall. The books are of mundane matters, like local legends and tales. The chests contain writing materials for writing contracts.

5. Formal Dining Room – This room contains a large dining table that seats ten. In addition to the double door entrance from the south, a simple door leads west to the kitchen.

6. Hallway – This hall connects the grand entrance, the stairs to the upper floor, the observatory, and the parlor. Additionally, there are a pair of doors in the north wall that open to the kitchen.

7. Staircase – This room contains a spiral staircase leading to the upper floor and the observatory.

8. Lounge – This room holds a bench and two comfortable chairs with an end table between them. A buffet, containing many bottles of premium liquor, ports, and wines, in addition to a full bar setup, shares a wall with a stairway on the other side that descends to the cellar.

9. Kitchen – This large room contains two food preparation tables, a large cooking fire, a small larder, and containers of dry foodstuffs.

Upper Floor

10. Stairs – This spiral staircase connects the ground floor with the upper floor and the two levels of the observatory.

11. Main Hallway – This hallway connects every room on the upper floor to the stairs. It runs the breadth of the house from east to west.

12A. Gavin Montagu's Bedchamber – This large room is where Gavin retires from the world. It contains a large, extravagant bed and the table and chairs where he takes his breakfast. A map chest containing many detailed maps of Meawold (focusing on the major trade routes over land and via water) rests on the west wall. A large armoire and his deceased wife's dressing table are along the south wall. The east wall holds a door to his closet and a cabinet containing just shy of one hundred of his wife's two-foot by three-foot still life paintings. Five paintings are on display; the remainder are in the cabinet. He changes the art weekly.

12B. Montagu's Closet – The door to this room is locked with an advanced lock [Thieves' Tools with +15% difficulty] to open. The room contains a chest holding four thousand platinum pieces, a cabinet containing his wife's jewelry (worth approximately 4,000 gp), a bench, and a crate containing the following: 5,000 sp, 2,600 gp, 60 pp, bolt of fine cloth (25 gp), rabbit fur ribbon (25 gp), ceramic miniature of a castle (25 gp), leather bracers (25 gp), +1 Shield, Gauntlets of Dexterity (DMG p. 145), and 2 x Sword of Sharpness (longsword) (DMG p. 166). Note: Gavin is too rattled to recall he has these magic weapons.

13A. Posh Guest Bedroom – This room has two double beds, well made and comfortable. Each bed has a nightstand to the side and a chest at the foot for the storage of personal items. A table with a pair of chairs sits near the eastern window. The room has a door in the west wall leading to the closet and is completed by a double chest of drawers and an armoire.

13B. Guest Bedroom Closet – This closet contains two dressing benches and an armoire designed to hold armor.

14. Large Guest Bedroom – This room has three double beds, good, but not as nice as the other beds on this floor. Each bed has a nightstand to the side and a chest at the foot for the storage of personal items. A table with three chairs sits in the southeast corner. The room is completed by a double chest of drawers and an armoire. The table suggests that valets or other servants of guests might have polished boots and cleaned clothes for their masters here.

15. Montagu's Upstairs Office – This office contains a desk, a table with three chairs, and a bookcase with several bound journals on the shelves. The books are transactions, including special terms. The books are encoded in a way that only a combination of read languages and remove curse can decipher them without harm. The logs go back four years. The last year contains

several transactions with a new customer named Truegust involving a string of boxes he has imported into the city from Boldon, a small city out near the coast.

16. Small Guest Room – This room has a comfortable double bed. The bed has a nightstand to the side and a chest at the foot for the storage of personal items. A table with a pair of chairs sits in the southwest corner. The room is completed by a double chest of drawers and an armoire.

17. Medium Guest Room – This room has two comfortable double beds. Each bed has a nightstand to the side and a chest at the foot for the storage of personal items. A table with a pair of chairs sits in the southwest corner. The room is completed by a double chest of drawers and an armoire.

Basement

18. Larder and Food Storage – This room sits at the bottom of the stairs from the ground floor. It holds a larger larder than the kitchen, dry foodstuffs, and drying herbs. Additionally, fresh water, wine, ale, mead, and cases of fine liquor are stored here. There is a door in the south wall.

19. Cook Quarters – This unused storage room has been converted into the quarters for the cook and her mate. The room was previously used as additional food storage when the family lived here, but the children have moved away and Mrs. Montagu passed almost two years before the present. The room is posh for servant quarters, on par with the medium and small guest rooms on the upper floor. There is a bell that Mr. Montagu can activate from his bed chamber to make Julianna aware of his needs.

Observatory

20. Observatory Landing – Torches topped by stones imbued with continual light illuminate the landing. Each “torch” has a cap that can be used to cover the stone. Spyglasses for use in the loft lie on benches, but there are no windows here.

21. Observatory Loft – This room overlooks the river with a grand view. The passenger docks and the merchant docks can be seen from this vantage point. The “torches” in this room are identical to the ones on the observatory landing. All the windows can be opened to have a slightly clearer view of the area.



Cartographer: Justin Andrew Mason

The Cornwallis Empire

Key Person

Beatrix Cornwallis

Wyatt listed Beatrix Cornwallis because she is a powerful woman, seems a bit off to Wyatt, and her equestrian empire sits as the sole provider of horses in the region. She owns the city stables, wainwrights, coachworks, coach storage, and a large horse farm a few miles from the capital city. Her stables produce all the types of horses required for Meawold except heavy war horses; others specialize in breeding them. Her equestrian empire is based in Meawold and gives her the freedom and power to potentially back a conspiracy to help Hastur into the world. The idea of cornering the market on horses and horse services started three generations before Beatrix. She saw gaps in her ancestor's plans and filled in the gaps to create her empire. In modern business terms, she has fully vertically integrated the horse industry for Meawold and the surrounding region.

Count Gylip has standing contracts with Beatrix Cornwallis to supply all equestrian, cartwright, stable, and coachwork needs to the Kingdom of Meawold and its military forces. This base income, due to the vertical integration, covers the operating costs of all her businesses and her household. All additional services enrich her war chest. The war chest is growing to allow her to take over more related industries. Whenever she tires of paying for a service, she looks to take it over. Because she provides fair and consistent service, the court of Meawold does not see any harm in allowing her to maintain her monopoly. She is a businesswoman who is centuries ahead of her time. Despite her sharp business acumen and constant empire building, she is not difficult to work with and is quite easygoing when not in a business state of mind.

Beatrix is short for a human at four feet, ten inches tall. She is slender with long, curly, white hair framing an oval face with black eyes. Her skin makes her look about a decade older than her actual age of forty-four. Plagues from the past have left her skin rough and pockmarked. Her demeanor is warm and open. She carefully maintains a balance of business aggression and physical aggression although she is, at heart, a pacifist. This doesn't mean she is a doormat or goes about unprotected, only that her protectors will seek to resolve a situation with as little use of force as possible while keeping her safe.

Beatrix enjoys her large empire, but the business deals do not quell her interest in understanding how things work. Many contraptions have been bought, disassembled, and followed by notes from her to the inventor showing where they could improve their

design. Always thinking forward, this minor aspect of her personality feeds into her innovations in controlling all aspects of horse-based businesses.

Beatrix runs the business because her husband, Ledym, has no mind for it. He spends his time in social clubs, attending court, and drinking in pubs. He drinks considerably, to the point of affecting his life expectancy. The members of high society and the court (largely one and the same) assume she took over to keep them from failing. Really, Ledym was picked by Beatrix exactly because he was good in court, and horrible at business. He willingly turned everything over to her, and she continued to build an empire once he admitted he was a failure at business.

Their unusual relationship doesn't end there. Their manor house has a small live-in staff: her lady's maid and four others. The remainder of the staff live elsewhere and come to the house to perform their duties. Two staff members, Beatrix's driver and bodyguard, live in a small apartment over the stables of her home. Her maid is really her lover. Ledym is merely a convenient beard for her real love. Stella has been her lover under the guise of her maid for fifteen years.

While Meawold has no laws governing sexual practices, high society and the court have different views. They feel that for the nobles, marriage is about political or business alliances, and children exist to cement those alliances and provide opportunities for future alliances. They see torrid affairs, including same-sex relationships, as threats to the alliances built on marriage and heirs. Because of these leanings, the members of both tend to shun those who they see as indulging those base desires.

Ledym is left to take care of his own needs. He keeps a mistress in town very discreetly. He accepts his role because it allows him to indulge in his vices and frees him from responsibility. He is given an allowance, which is sufficient to cover his memberships, his mistress, and his lifestyle.

Beatrix is an interesting blend of aggression and compassion with sharp business acumen and deep secrets. She dislikes court due to their feelings toward her orientation, but attends regularly to maintain and grow business connections. Her alignment tends toward neutral good.

Ability Scores: STR 8, DEX 10, CON 9, INT 16, WIS 10, CHA 15

Reactions to the Party

Beatrix is warm, open, and cordial to the party, answering all questions after giving them adequate consideration. Her answers come naturally, even the offensive ones. Only when the party is a threat to her empire will she become defensive. At this point her demeanor will start to change, and she will grow hostile as the questions continue along the wrong lines and the threat to her empire grows.

If asked about Hastur or the Old Ones, she proclaims that she proudly worships Saren, god of spring, dawn, birth, youth, vitality, and athletics, and knows nothing of Hastur or the Old Ones. If the party talks about how vile Hastur is or what he wants of the world, she wants to know who would support bringing such a revolting being into the world. Her aid to the party regarding this threat is limited because she will leverage no military or guard connections. She will do what she can to help the party move against the person or persons responsible for bringing Hastur into the world. Any request will be considered; any request within reason and her areas of influence will be indulged.

If confronted or asked about her relationships with Ledym and Stella, she is very guarded. She has a reasonable answer for everything. Stella helps her before she rises for the day: breakfast in bed, helping her dress, etc. If the party presses further, interrogates Stella or Ledym, or otherwise has proof of the relationship, she will become defensive. Her need to protect her secret is great enough that if she perceives a serious threat to her secret, she will hire assassins to track the party members down and eliminate them. If they are merely a threat, discrediting the party will be sufficient.

If attacked, guards track the party relentlessly (in several teams of twelve) until captured and returned to Meawold for judgement. Roleplay the encounter. The most likely outcome is execution of the party members.

For investigating Beatrix and helping her protect her position in court, each party member earns 2,000 experience points.



Beatrix Cornwallis. Artist: Henriette Boldt

Cornwallis Manor

The Cornwallis manor is located five miles outside the city, near to their tenant farms. The opulent estate is surrounded by gardens with two outbuildings: stables with a pair of apartments for Beatrix's driver and her bodyguard, and a bunkhouse where two shifts of guards work three days at a stretch before being rotated back to the city.

Ground Floor

1 – Grand Entrance – This entrance is one of the nicest in Meawold. It is marble, expensive, and well maintained.

2 – Main Hall and Side Halls – The halls connect to most rooms on the ground floor. They are lined with statues and art.

3, 4 – Side Halls – The side halls allow access to a pair of rooms each, and both end in an alcove commonly used for meditation.

5 – Staff Dining and Break Room – This front room is used by the staff to take their meals and breaks. It contains a table for six and four additional chairs.

6 – Garden – The house hosts a large garden with a well. This area is where visitors are left to wait while the staff asks if the residents will receive their guests.

7 – Meeting Room – This room will seat ten plus Beatrix Cornwallis; additionally, there is room for a presenter in the middle. Beatrix does not use the town guildhall to host negotiations. Her contracts are uniformly enforced due to her ties with the royal house.

8 – Dining Room – This is an intimate space for the eight that it can seat. Normally it seats three. Beatrix takes the head of the table, Ledym sits to her right, and Stella sits at the far end of the table on Beatrix's left.

9 – Beatrix's Office – This office is very opulent and is where Beatrix works on estate matters and more intellectual pursuits. It contains her desk, a lectern, a work table scattered with astrological instruments and notes, a large telescope, a large bookshelf, and two cabinets containing more items of interest: crystals, gems, and a dozen meteorites ranging in size from a marble to a cannon ball.

10 – Ledym's Office – When conducting business for society, court, or his various clubs, Ledym uses this office. It contains some notes about each group. The notes that stand out cover Ledym's plan to methodically coax society to soften their abhorrence toward other sexualities. At the bottom of his plan is a comment, "Then I can divorce her and enjoy my life with Lydia."

11 – Grand Ballroom – This room is used when the Cornwallises host parties for the members of high society. In the past, it has seen use as a large banquet

hall and held memorial services. Ledym arranges these events. Beatrix makes a tastefully timed visit to them.

12 – Kitchen – This room is where all meals are prepared. It contains the larder, storage for dry goods, barrels holding cooking oils, water and ale, and a wine rack holding about thirty bottles.

13 – Storage Room – This room connects the grand ballroom to the basement and holds household supplies, including a spare area rug.

14 – Stairs Down – These stairs lead down to the basement.

Upper Floor

15, 16 – East and West Stairs – These stairs connect to the ground floor and are mirrors of each other. They are another example of the separate lives Beatrix and Ledym lead.

17 – Cornwallis Library – This large library holds about eight hundred books, two lecterns, and a table that can seat six.

18 – Ledym Cornwallis Study – Ledym is very active in court, high society, and several social and hunting clubs. His study reflects his many interests and awards from these organizations.

19 – Guest Room – This nice room will sleep up to four. It contains a large armoire, a table with chairs, a trunk at the foot of each bed, and a shared night table between the beds.

20 – Ledym Cornwallis Bedchamber – This bedroom is nicely furnished with armoires, a comfortable bed, nice art on the walls, and a table for taking his breakfast on the upper floor. Ledym sleeps here a lot less than he should. He has become lazy and careless concerning his current mistress, Lydia. This issue is coming to a head, and Beatrix will start having him locked in his bedchamber at night and reduce his allowance if it doesn't end soon. Discretion is a must if he is to continue his affairs.

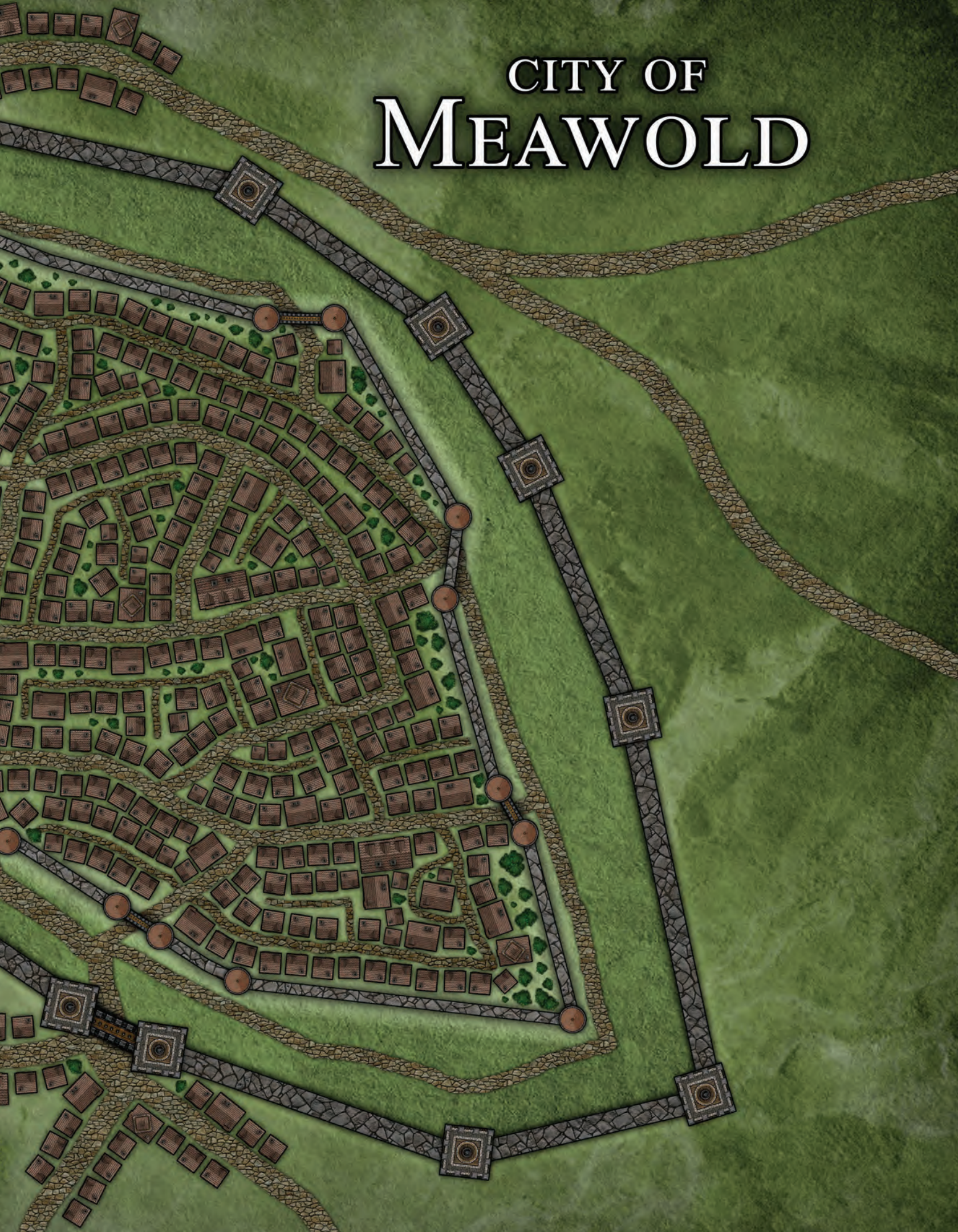
21 – Maid's Bedroom – Beatrix's lady's maid, Stella, uses this room as a bedroom. She was installed here to be close to her lady. There is a connecting door to Beatrix's bedchamber. An INTELLIGENCE check as part of a thorough investigation reveals that the bed is rarely used, and the door is used excessively, suggesting something secret between the two women.

22 – Beatrix Cornwallis Bedchamber – This opulent room is the bedchamber of Beatrix. It is finely furnished with a lot of storage for clothes, a luxurious bed, a pair of overstuffed chairs facing the fireplace, and a door connecting to the maid's bedroom. This room looks like Beatrix spent four times the gold furnishing it as she did Ledym's bedchamber.

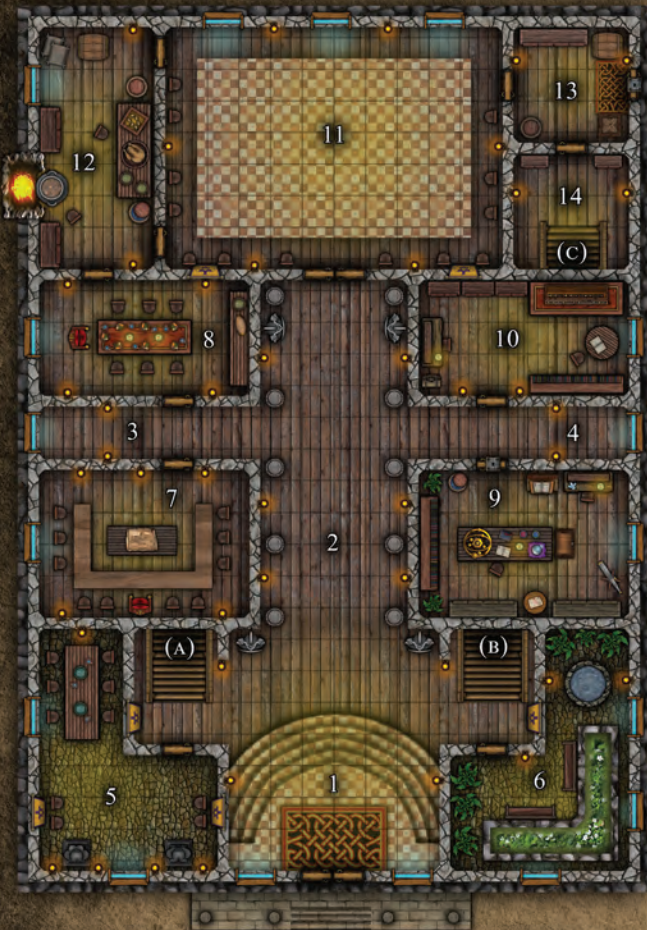


City of Meawold. Cartographer: Justin Andrew Mason

CITY OF MEAWOLD



1ST FLOOR



CORNWALLIS MANOR

2ND FLOOR



BASEMENT



Cartographer: Justin Andrew Mason

Basement

23 – Basement Entrance – Beatrix Cornwallis’s manor is so grand that she has a dedicated entrance to the basement. The staff placed some of the most often used supplies in the area.

24 – Household Storage – This storeroom holds spare goods for the house: linens, bed linens, out of season clothes, candles, writing materials, dry goods, and other household items.

25 – Staff Quarters – When off duty, the staff rests, recreates, and sleeps here. It contains four beds, two large armoires, a dressing table, and a table with four chairs.

The Explorer

Key Person

Sadon Truegust

Sadon made Wyatt's list because he behaves oddly, is quiet and reserved, and because his position as a Royal Explorer allows him to move about the kingdom with complete freedom. Sadon could easily move information from Boldon, where the first attempt to bring an aspect of Hastur happened a couple of years ago, to likeminded people in Meawold.

Sadon (human) is fifty-three years old and looks every day of it. Exploring Barestir has left its many marks on him. His diamond-shaped face is horribly scarred from the worst of his exploits. He wears his curly, auburn hair very long. This along with the hood of his cloak, seemingly always raised, go a long way in helping him hide the artifacts of his travels and misadventures. When he is face to face with someone, his bright, mesmerizing golden eyes have a similar effect on people. So effective are his techniques that few realize just how scarred his face is.

He stands an inch shy of six feet with an average build of well-toned, but not brawny, muscle. From decades of travel throughout Meawold and other parts of Barestir, his skin is permanently tanned. Unlike his face, his body is largely unscarred and smooth. A poorly executed tattoo of a nude woman is inked on his upper left arm, a relic of his idealism and youth from the first few years of his career.

The explorer is married; however, his wife gave up on him over a decade ago after he spent six years on an assignment and never checked in on her or sent word that he was well. She moved to Lagduf and started a new life with a merchant who is home every night for dinner and dotes on her. Sadon sold his abandoned home after she left. When in Meawold, he lives in a nice room at the Cracked Flask that he keeps year-round. He has no contact with his wife.

Sadon is under the permanent control of a brain drinker. His nightmare began shortly after the events of *DNH1 – The Lost Temple of Forgotten Evil*. After the weakened aspect of Hastur was destroyed, the brain drinker took interest in the remnants of the cult, captured them, ate most of their brains, and controlled a few for interacting with others. After a few weeks of planning, Sadon fell into his trap and was also controlled.



Sadon Truegust. Artist: Todd Shearer

Ability Scores: STR 12, DEX 19, CON 17, INT 13, WIS 13, CHA 10

Reactions to the Party

Sadon is cold and distant towards the party members. He stares off into space for a few moments before answering.

If asked about Hastur or the Old Ones, he will ramble on about how the world is chaotic, vile, and falling into debauchery. On and on he will ramble, to the point of sounding like a mad hermit. At several points, he will mention that Szordree (sounds a bit like swordry) will bring about an end to corruption. When pressed on who Szordree is, he will revert to a childlike state. Pressed further, and he will sit upright, his tone of voice will shift, and Szordree will speak to the party directly through him. Szordree will taunt the party members and dare them to find him. Also, he will mention his monks will finish what he has started. If forced to expose himself, Szordree will kill Sadon. Another of his puppets will take over Sadon's role of communicating with the cultists.

If asked about his explorations, he will liven up and tell as many tales of exotic ruins, fierce monsters, and

daring escapes as the party can handle. Eventually, the party members will need to change the subject to get him to stop. The GM is welcome to make up as many tales as it takes to drive the party members to change the subject. With thirty-five years of exploration, coming across as if he has seen it all is not unrealistic. He has seen a lot.

Szordree Tsambrae

The brain drinker, Szordree Tsambrae, who controls Sadon is the real entity behind the attempt to create a vessel for Hastur's aspect and bring the world under his control. As an extraplanar creature, this world falling has little consequence for Szordree. However, he expects to dine on many insane brains as the world crumbles, leaving only when he has had his fill.

Szordree's plan is well constructed. He learned much from the failure at Boldon and has countered each of their mistakes with a masterful plan. The vessel is larger because the old one was too small. The cultists at Boldon had no idea; they inherited the vessel. The small size of the Boldon vessel required many rituals to draw the aspect into the vessel, and it was destroyed before more than a quarter of the aspect could be drawn. Szordree's vessel can pull the aspect across in one ritual.

Stone for the vessel was imported from about a thousand miles away. The type needed is not local to Meawold. It was collected near dwarven lands. The temple was constructed to match the specifications of the ritual books Szordree recovered from the temples he could find and the dark libraries he could plunder.

The head of the statue is about two weeks from being completed, plus another week to set it and let it cure in place. The temple room is waiting on more fabric for the curtains and for the altar to be completed. The stonemason cracked the first altar from a careless strike on a stress point. It will be ready about the same time as the statue. The stonemason is missing three toes as a reminder to

be more careful.

Sadon smuggled Szordree into Meawold and installed him in the room he keeps year-round at the Cracked Flask. Confronting them there will not stop the plans. The man running the secret temple for Szordree, Monder Balley, knows the plans from where he is now through completion—drawing the aspect of Hastur into the vessel. From there, the vessel will animate, and Hastur will be in charge.

After a year of planning and another year of execution, the brain drinker has built a temple and a nearly completed vessel. He is about three weeks from filling the vessel with an aspect. The statue is not finished and will need to be consecrated, and ten more members need to be recruited. This time the aura will enthrall the leaders of Meawold within days, and Hastur will have the kingdom within three months. From there, the brain drinker expects to move on to the other four kingdoms using a similar agenda to cause Barestir to fall to Hastur.

For investigating Sadon, confronting Szordree, and discovering the temple below Castle Brytha, each party member earns 4,000 experience points.



Szordree Tsambrae. Artist: Z Mann Zilla

The Cracked Flask (Sadon Truegust)

Ground Floor

1 – Dining Room – This large room holds several tables that seat four normally but can seat six when at capacity. Spare chairs are stacked under the south window for this purpose.

2A – Bar – This area seats about ten and is where the bartender prepares drinks and calls food orders back to the kitchen.

2B – Kitchen – This large room has a small larder, cooking fire, two preparation tables, and storage for dry goods. Meals are prepared here from dawn to midnight by two shifts of three staff. Stairs behind a door lead to a basement.

3 – Storage – This storage room holds casks and kegs of wine, beer, ale, and mead. There are four cases of liquor as well. The door is locked; the on-duty bar back helping the bartender holds the key to this room.

Middle Floor

4 – Common Area – All rooms on the second floor connect to this area that has a pair of tables and a cabinet holding spare bed linen. Additionally, this room connects to stairs down to the ground floor (A) and to the upper floor (B). This floor holds the nicer rooms of the inn.

5, 6, 7 – Deluxe Rooms – Each of these rooms has two firm beds, an armoire, a chest at the foot of each bed, and a small nightstand next to the bed. These rooms rent for 1 gp per night.

8 – Private Suite, Bedroom – This suite is occupied by Sadon Truegust. He has a single comfortable bed with a nice area rug under it, fireplace with two overstuffed chairs, a well-built wooden table for meetings, an armoire, and a chest at the foot of the bed. The door is locked with an advanced lock (+15% difficulty to open). Normally, Sadon and his master are in the room and the door is locked. If anyone knocks or calls from the door, Szordree retreats to Area 9. The staff brings Sadon meals three times a day. Szordree slips out into Meawold every three days to take three lives, one brain to drink during the kill and two to bottle for the next two days. This minimizes his exposure.

9 – Private Suite, Office – The office can only be accessed from the suite bedroom. It holds a large bookshelf, two armoires, a dresser, a chest, and a comfortable desk. Szordree will keep his existence a secret unless their plans are threatened, then he and Sadon will attack viciously. Somewhere in the interaction with the party members Szordree will taunt them, saying that even in death he will ultimately prevail.

Upper Floor

10 – Common Area – This common area connects most of the rooms of this floor to the stairs from the middle floor.

11 – Second Common Area – This second common area connects the upper floor common area with the remaining two guest rooms. Guests are welcome to take any of their meals at the table in this area.

12 – Corridor to Rooms – This hallway connects the meal area to a pair of rooms.

13, 14, 15, 16, 17 – Guest Rooms – These rooms hold two double beds, a chest at the foot of each bed, and a nightstand next to each bed. The occupants share an armoire. These rooms can quarter up to four people and rent for 5 sp per night.

Basement

18 – Kitchen Storage – This room has a large larder and more storage for dry goods. It also holds brewing supplies and barrels of water.

19 – Brewing Room – The Cracked Flask brews beers and ales here.



Guildhall (Fay Commonbok)

Most guilds use the Guildhall. No intra-guild or inter-guild deal is official unless held in the hall and the written contract holds the seal of the guild master. The guild master and his staff belong to no guild, but serve all guilds.

1 – Entrance – Eight spectacular carved columns, each depicting a guild, surround the entrance.

2, 3, 4, 5 – Front Lobby – This area is open to the public from dawn to dusk, allowing them to mill about and ask questions. The four large statues are all of the god of trade, Mercu.

6 – Private Waiting Area – This room has sturdy doors, secured by reinforced thick wood and locks. A member of the guild house staff can allow access. This is where Fay Commonbok agrees to meet the party members to discuss their concerns. She is at the guild house overseeing negotiations to buy five thousand acres from the trade guild, who is negotiating on behalf of a lumberjack team. She desires the nearly clear-cut property to grow her farms.

7A, 7B, 7C, 8, 9, 10A, 10B, 10C – Halls – These halls are secured most of the time against the public. They separate the pre-negotiation rooms and the negotiating table to dampen conversations. Guildhall staff are careful to keep these areas clear of loiterers, and they will not hesitate to usher them to the lobby (Areas 2–5) if someone appears to be eavesdropping. The Guildhall staff are polite to a fault, but will not hesitate to direct, walk, or drag people from the area if they appear intent on disrupting, or worse, spying on the proceedings.

11, 12, 13, 14 – Pre-Negotiation Rooms – These four rooms allow for both sides to meet in a smaller, private setting and work toward an agreement, usually on specific points of the larger deal. The rooms have a pair of desks facing each other for

the primary of each party to work on specific points, a bookshelf with a library of past contracts, three cabinets holding writing material, and enough chairs for each party to bring two more participants.

15 – Guild Masters Office – This opulent office is the primary workspace of the guild master. She often reads over a contract here before holding the final reading and has chairs to allow her to bring both parties into the office to discuss problems with the contract, almost like a judge seeing counsel in their chambers. The large cabinets contain past contracts, and the bookshelf that engulfs most of the south wall holds books on law for Meawold, including every duchy in the kingdom.

16 – Public Contract Storage – This room holds copies of every contract executed in the kingdom for all to peruse. Access to this room is chaperoned by a member of the Guildhall staff.

17 – Storage Room – This room contains spare quills, ink, stamps, wax, and other miscellaneous supplies.

18 – The Grand Negotiating Table – This room hosts the contract negotiation starting meetings, round table discussions, and the final reading. Additionally, all parties sign the contract before the guild master. There is adequate seating for up to six members of each party and a gallery for an additional twenty observers. When an initial or final meeting is held here, up to twenty members of the public can observe the proceedings. When the parties are having round table conversations, the public is removed.



Cartographer: Justin Andrew Mason

Commonbok Dynasty

Suspicious activity from her coachman, Darren, earned the Commonbok clan a place on Wyatt's list. The Commonboks were the only list item she had time to follow up on before delivering the list to the party. Darren answers to Colin and Fay Commonbok directly. He receives guests for them, making him more of a butler than a coachman. Wyatt notes that Fay was observed having more interactions with Darren than Collin.

Key Persons

Darren (Coachman)

The coachman for the Commonbok family is fully dedicated to the family. He is discreet, reserved, and never speaks out of line. After a few minutes talking with him and receiving answers along the lines of "You would best talk to Mrs. Fay about that matter," the party members will understand he is not the person they seek. He is in communication with members of the thieves' guild concerning a private matter for Fay.

Collin Commonbok

Colin, 58 y.o. (human), is an artist preferring to spend his days painting and leaving their empire in the capable hands of his wife. Within a few minutes of talking with Collin, the party members have a general idea that he is in his own world and not the party of interest. He does mention a royal consultation from the book monks working in the castle: they were struggling to restore a book, destroyed it further, and asked him for help reproducing or transplanting several illustrations.

Fay Commonbok

Fay Commonbok, 53 y.o. (human), is the magnate of a very large agricultural empire to the southwest of Meawold. The empire spans over twenty thousand acres, managing about four hundred tenants with their families along with about twelve hundred farm workers, and storage of the crops.

She stands about five and a half feet tall and is quite curvy. Her long, straight blonde hair frames a diamond shaped, innocent face with deeply tanned skin and emerald green eyes. Her left ear has a very large earring, while she wears a simple stud in her right ear. She dresses elegantly when in public and more rustically when visiting the farms.

Her attractive features hide a shrewd businesswoman, one who built an empire from the two thousand acres her father left her forty years ago. She maintains key strategic alliances with her competition, swallows many family farms yearly, and guards her monopoly contracts with Meawold. These strengths position her to grow

without limit, handle matters as she sees fit within her empire, and rely on the armies of Meawold when she has problems that threaten Meawold's critical food supply.

Despite her sharp business acumen, she is always extremely polite, respectful, and well spoken. She is polite even when disciplining a disappointing tenant. Her politeness is in sharp contrast to her lack of compassion for her tenants or their workers. She keeps them in debt enough that they can never leave her farms, ensuring labor for her empire for generations.

Fay runs her farms with an iron fist in an elegant glove. Tenant farmers frequently find themselves deep in debt for any number of, mostly petty, reasons: lost crops, poorly maintained farm gear, unkempt grounds, children not in school or at work, and a litany of other deviations from how she expects them to live. When an infraction occurs, property is seized, fines are assessed, workers are reassigned for a fortnight, or the family is forced to buy food from her company store at severely marked up prices. Complaints to the authorities of Meawold are, by contract, referred back to Fay for resolution. Which means the fine, penalties, and other conditions remain, sometimes with an additional fine added on so she can reclaim her time.

Despite her harsh treatment of her tenants, Fay works within the law. She isn't really evil, just has no concern for how the law impacts peasants. She tends toward an alignment of lawful neutral.

Ability Scores: STR 11, DEX 8, CON 9, INT 11, WIS 13, CHA 14

Reaction to the Party

Darren

He will answer every question posed to him about such matters with "I will ask you to discuss this with the lady of the house. I have nothing to say on that topic."

Colin Commonbok

If asked about the Old Ones or Hastur, he will respond that he knows little beyond landscapes and wildlife for his paintings. The family worships Lyvalia.

If asked about the harsh treatment of tenants and their workers, he will respond that he doesn't follow business concerns and that his wife, Fay, would be a better source for such queries.

Fay Commonbok

If asked about the Old Ones or Hastur, she will state that she has never heard of them, or it, and that she and her family are worshipers of Lyvalia. If pressed, she has heard the name Hastur once in court, but thought it was an old tale used to scare peasants to mind their curfew.

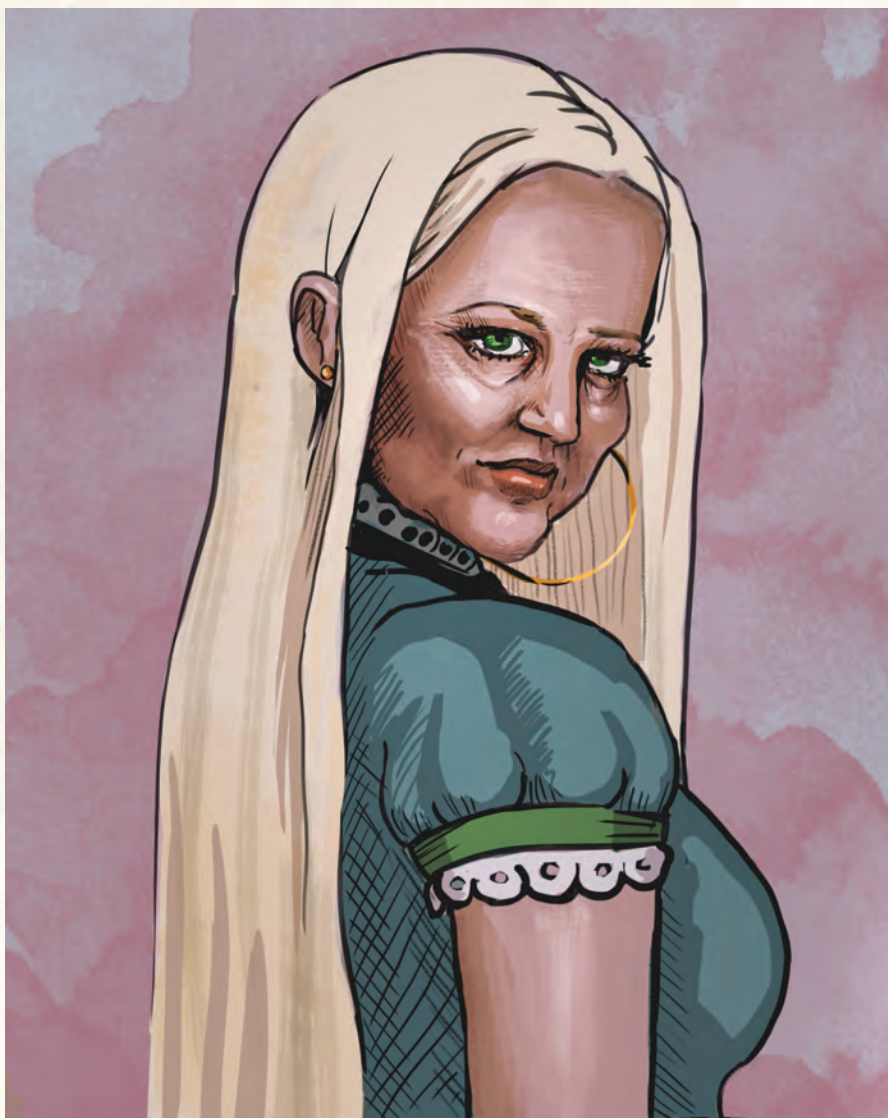
If asked about the harsh treatment of tenants and their workers, she will reply that peasants must be protected and guided, left to their own they become lazy and fail to serve the kingdom by providing foodstuffs. She is a bit strict because the peasants are particularly difficult, even going so far to invent stories of abuse to get a few hours off to laze about.

If asked why Darren has been skulking about town and having conversations with known thieves and other knaves, she explains that just over a fortnight ago, while on their way back from a farm inspection, their coach was robbed. The thieves took trinkets and some cash, neither of which matters to her, and a pendant. The pendant was a gift from her paternal grandmother during the two-year gap between her parents' and the grandmother's deaths. It holds great sentimental value to her as it feels like her grandmother, in giving the pendant, was telling her to replace her father and grow her inheritance into an empire. Darren was tasked with discreetly contacting the thieves' guild to arrange return. They disavowed conducting or authorizing the robbery. Darren was sent back to the guild to hire them to recover the pendant and discipline the encroaching robbers for not obtaining sanction before the attack. Now that she is aware her coachman has not exercised discretion, she is furious.

If the party members convince her there is a threat to Meawold, she offers an independent reward of 500 pp per party member for neutralizing this threat to her homelands. If the players ask for armed men, she will supply a dozen men-at-arms who fight to the death as ordered by the party members. (They use the stat blocks of NPC, Spy, MM p. 349.)

If attacked, eight guards will come to the aid of the Commonboks, with eight more arriving each third round until the party is routed or killed.

For investigating Fay and helping her protect her empire from scandal within high society, each party member earns 2,000 experience points



Fay Commonbok. Artist: Henriette Boldt

Castle Brytha

Castle Grounds

The castle sits behind a wall with four towers and a gatehouse. There are six independent structures in addition to the keep.

1 – Gate House – The gatehouse is fortified by outer doors, three portcullises, a fifteen-foot-long drawbridge over a water pit, and numerous guards. The water pit is fifteen feet below the drawbridge and filled with twenty feet of water coated with a thick oily sheen. The oil can be lit to help repel invaders.

2 – Grounds and Entrance to the Keep – The grounds are paved with gravel, allowing access to the detached structures without risk of mud or muck. The gravel is three feet deep. Stairs lead to massive double doors, the entrance to the keep. From the outside, an observer cannot tell the main keep is split into two wings with the inner courtyard being the only connecting feature.

3 – Inner Courtyard – This courtyard provides a fountain and some green space for the residents of the keep while separating the two wings.

4 – Well House – Fresh water is drawn from a spring in this building.

5 – Grounds Keeper Quarters – The grounds keeper for the castle lives here.

6 – Blacksmith – A master blacksmith has a smith shop on the ground floor and lives in a loft over the shop.

7 – General Barracks – The staff and guards live here. Generally, they are either on duty, here resting, or at the pub socializing.

8 – Chapel – This chapel seats about 50 and has a bell tower.

9 – Castle Pub – This pub serves as entertainment and refreshment for the staff who work on the grounds of the castle. Meals can be prepared and served here. Most of the time, food is sent from the castle kitchen piping hot.

10, 11 – North Towers – These towers look over the north approach and allow the guards to protect the north wall.

12, 13 – Mid Wall Observation Post – This area extends out from the walls, providing better visibility to the guards.

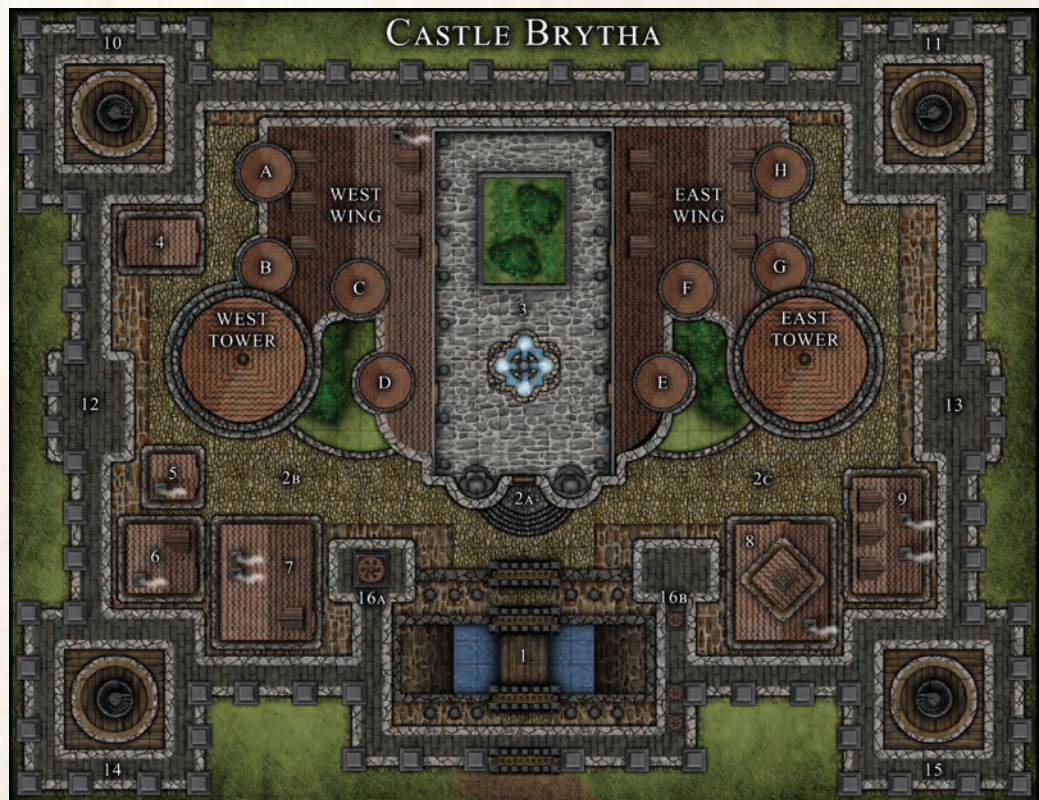
14, 15 – South Towers – These towers look over the south approach and allow the guards to protect the gate.

16A – Drawbridge Control – The drawbridge is controlled from this area.

16B – Portcullis Control – All three portcullises are independently controlled from this area.

If Violence Occurs in the Castle

The castle and grounds are guarded continuously. Any violence on the castle grounds that can be overheard (everywhere except the temple and cases of stealthy kills) will draw six guards to end the violence. A backup unit of six more will arrive each third round until a total of twenty-four guards engage. If defeated or captured, roleplay the encounter, banishment being the most likely outcome.



Castle Brytha - Castle Grounds. Cartographer: Justin Andrew Mason

The East and West Towers

These towers are identical, extend five levels above the ground floor of the keep, and are used for storage. They are the keep's food reserves.

- 1 – Mead Storage – This room is filled with half-barrels of mead.
- 2 – Rain Water Storage – This room is filled with barrels of rain water.
- 3 – Wine Storage – This room is filled with half-barrels of wine.
- 4 – Wheat Storage – This room contains a large quantity of wheat.
- 5 – Rye Storage – This room contains a large quantity of rye.
- 6 – Barley Storage – This room contains a large quantity of barley.
- 7 – Oat Storage – This room contains a large quantity of oats.
- 8 – Black Bean Storage – This room contains a very large

quantity of dried black beans.

9 – Lima Bean Storage – This room contains a large quantity of dried lima beans.

10 – Pinto Bean Storage – This room contains a large quantity of dried pinto beans.

11 – Dried Peas Storage – This room contains a large quantity of dried peas.

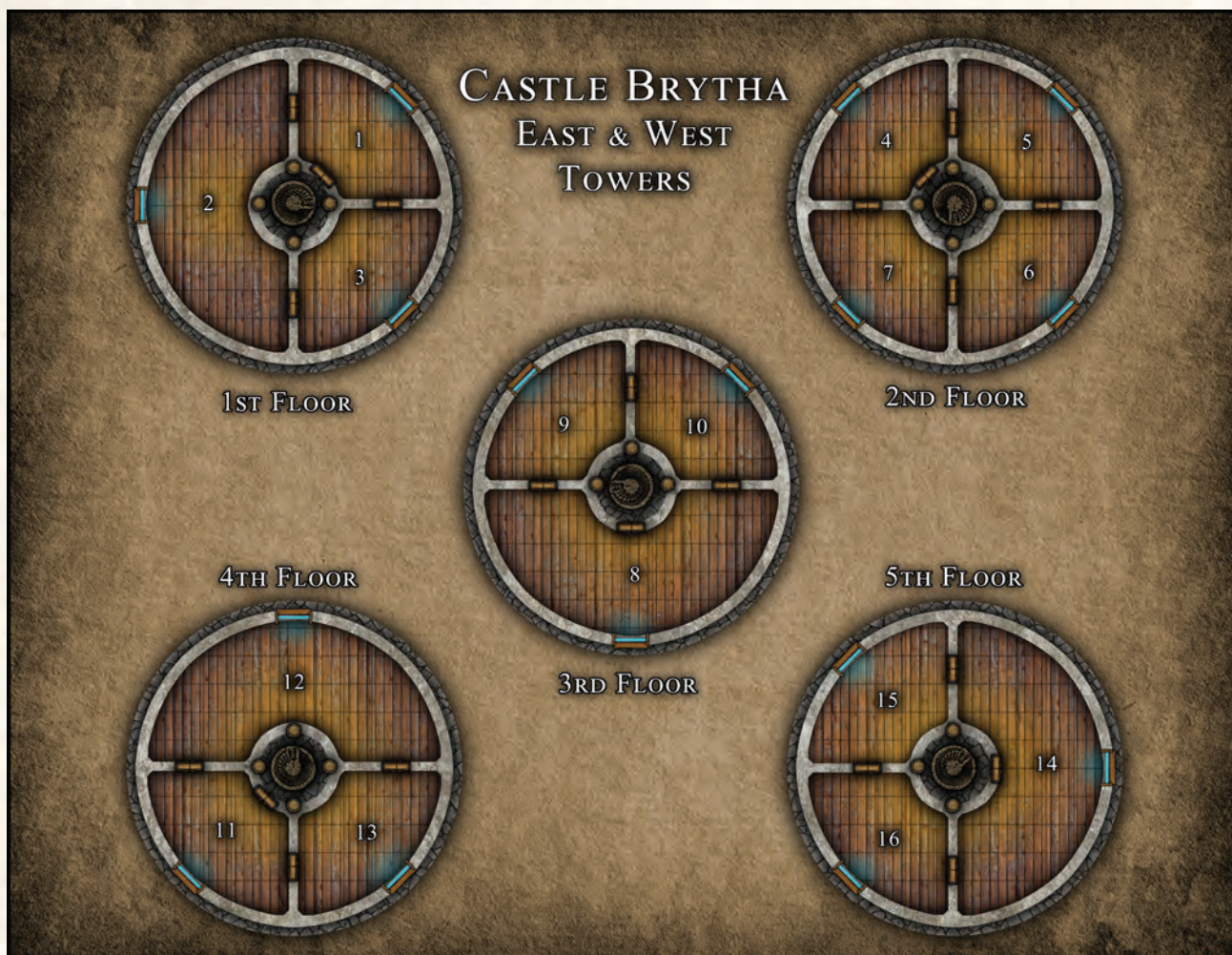
12 – Smoked Fish – This room contains a very large quantity of smoked fish.

13 – Salted Fish Storage – This room contains a large quantity of salted fish.

14 – Smoked Ham – This room holds a very large quantity of smoked ham.

15 – Smoked and Salted Sausages – This room holds a large quantity of smoked and salted sausages (think salami, not breakfast sausages).

16 – Smoked Bacon – This room holds a large quantity of smoked bacon.



Castle Brytha - Towers. Cartographer: Justin Andrew Mason

Main Keep – Ground Floor

The main keep is divided into two halves. This sprang from a dispute between brothers after a siege burned their keep and left their father clinging to life for the better half of a decade some hundred years ago. It was rebuilt in halves because of their searing hatred.

1, 2 – Storage Rooms – These rooms contain non-food supplies for the keep: more smokeless torches, writing supplies, blankets, spare clothes, bed linens, etc.

3 – Grand Dining Room – This opulent dining room can seat twelve plus the duke and duchess.

4 – Kitchen – This large kitchen prepares all meals for the keep. There are two crews of cooks. They live outside the keep. The room contains a large larder, preparation tables, barrels of water, casks of cooking oils, a large cooking fire, and dry goods storage.

5 – Hallway – This hallway connects the guestrooms to the stairs to the upper level, stairs to the west tower, the dining room, and the kitchen.

6 – Stairs to the West Tower

7 – Stairs to the Upper Floor

8, 9, 10 – Guest Rooms – These comfortable rooms house guests. Each has a comfortable double bed, a table, a chest, an armoire, and a basin and pitcher for freshening up. The chest can be locked; a key is left on the table for the guest. The majordomo holds a spare key to every lock in the keep on his person or secured in his room at night.

11 – Guard Storage Room – The men-at-arms who guard the keep use this room to store spare armor, spears, arrows, and other items they may require while maintaining security within the keep.

12 – Duty Guard Bunk Room – This room allows for the three guards (not on shift) from each duty cycle to rest, relax, and dress in their armor. It is spartan.

13 – Throne Room – This is where the duke presides over Meawold, and where court is hosted.

14, 15 – Negotiation Rooms – These rooms host negotiations with other kingdoms and within Meawold. The rooms are

enchanted to prevent eavesdropping.

16 – Hallway – This hallway connects the throne room to the stairs to both the upper floor and the east tower, the majordomo's quarters, and a guest room.

17 – Stairs to the Upper Floor

18 – Library – This is the private library of Meawold. It contains roughly a thousand volumes on various topics.

19 – Stairs to the East Tower

20 – Majordomo Chambers – This comfortable room is the quarters of the majordomo. It is nearly identical to Room 8, the differences being the amount of clothes and personal papers within. It could easily be the room of a guest staying for months. When the majordomo retires, the master keyring is put in the chest, where it is guarded by a fireball trap and a mechanical trap. The trap, if triggered, hits for 5d8 poison damage, **save vs. poison** for half damage.

21 – Guest Rooms – This room is identical to Room 8.



Castle Brytha - Ground Floor. Cartographer: Justin Andrew Mason

Main Keep – Upper Floor

1 – Hallway – This hallway connects the stairs from the ground floor to the grand fireplace and the staff dining room.

2 – Small Tower Access – This area connects the hallway to the spiral stairs to short, small Towers A, B, and C, as well as the visiting staff bunk room. This area is used to address the guards before starting their patrols.

3 – Long Corridor – This corridor connects the small tower access area to short, small Tower D.

4 – Visitor’s Staff Bunk Room – This room contains six beds with a chest at the foot, six armoires, and four tables with two or three stools at each table. When visitors bring a bodyguard or a valet, they are quartered here. Lady’s maids are quartered in the room with their lady.

5 – Visitor’s Staff Dining Room – This room is where the staff of visitors take their meals and recreate when not on duty.

6 – Access to Tower H – This room contains spiral stairs that lead to Tower A.

7 – Access to Tower H – This room contains spiral stairs that lead to Tower B.

8 – Access to Tower H – This room contains spiral stairs that lead to Tower C.

9 – Access to Tower H – This room contains spiral stairs that lead to Tower D.

10 – Small Tower Access – This area connects the hallway to the spiral stairs to short, small Towers F, G, and H, as well as the visiting staff bunk room. This area is used to address the house staff as a body.

11 – Long Corridor – This corridor connects the small tower access area to short, small Tower D.

12 – Hallway outside the Royal Bedchamber – Two guards are stationed here when either member of the royal couple is in the bedchamber.

13 – Ducal Study – This is the private study of the Duke of Meawold. It contains a very large reading table, a desk, and a bookshelf holding about two hundred volumes.

14 – Grand Bedroom – This is the sleeping chambers of the duke and

his wife. It contains an opulent bed, a writing desk, two plush chairs, and three armoires.

15 – Access to Tower H – This room contains spiral stairs that lead to Tower H.

16 – Access to Tower H – This room contains spiral stairs that lead to Tower G.

17 – Access to Tower H – This room contains spiral stairs that lead to Tower F.

18 – Access to Tower H – This room contains spiral stairs that lead to Tower E.

Castle Watch Towers – All eight towers use the same map.

1 – Castle Watch Towers – These towers are one level above the upper floor of the keep. They contain some backup supplies and offer a spectacular view of Meawold and the surrounding lands.



Castle Brytha - Second Floor. Cartographer: Justin Andrew Mason

Castle Brytha – Detached Buildings Floorplans

1 – Gate House – Described under Castle Grounds

2 – Grounds and Entrance to the Keep – Described under Castle Grounds

3 – Keep Courtyard – Described under Castle Grounds

4 – Well House

This building shelters the main well and allows fresh water to be drawn as needed. Several barrels are stored here.

5 – Ground Keeper's Quarters

The groundskeeper, his wife, and young boy live in this small building.

6 – Blacksmith

A – Smithy – This is the workshop for the master blacksmith of Meawold. It contains a medium forge, anvil, racks of tools, and tables for planning work and working metals.

B – Smith's Loft – This small loft is enchanted to remain comfortable despite the heat generated by the forge while working. It contains a small desk, a comfortable bed, an armoire, a table, and a crib.

7 – General Barracks

The staff and off-duty guards sleep and rest here.

A – Entrance – The main floor holds ten double beds with a chest at the foot of each bed, and two armoires for storage.

B – Common Room – The tables in this room host a pair of card games most days of the week.

C – Storage – This room contains the stores for the barracks. The inventory includes spare bed linens, water, ale, some rations, and the stairs up to the commander's suite.

D – Commander's Bedroom – The commander of the guard sleeps, works, and plans here. It holds a desk. He is here most of the day, resting or working.

E – Briefing Room – This room hosts two shift change meetings per day. It can seat eight plus the commander. The bookshelves hold incident reports and shift logs.

8 – Chapel

A – Sanctuary – All rites, ceremonies, and services are held in this room. There are twelve pews that seat four each. The royal family has a private service elsewhere. The temple is dedicated to many gods. Priests who live in the town come to provide services on their day. There is a ladder to the right of the altar and an access point in the ceiling that leads to Area B.

B – Bell Tower Mid-Level – This room is halfway from the chapel to the bells. There is a bell pull in this room.

C – Bell Tower Top Level – This area is open to the elements. It is visited for bell maintenance.

9 – Castle Pub

A – Main Bar Area – Most patrons take their leisure time in this room. It has a long bar and two small tables.

B – Kitchen – This room stores additional kegs of beer, ale, and wine. Food is also prepared here. Most of the staff take their meals here. Normally the kitchen inside the keep sends food. Sometimes the pub prepares food using its kitchen.

C – Larder – Food materials and food sent over by the keep kitchen is stored here until warmed for the staff.

D – Landing – This room connects the stairs from the ground level to the private room, staff bedroom, and owner's bedroom.

E – Staff Bedroom – The staff rests and sleeps here. It contains a table with several chairs, two armoires, and three comfortable beds.

F – Owners' Bedroom – The owners of the pub sleep and rest here. It contains two comfortable beds (one for the couple and one for their two daughters), a small table with two chairs, and two armoires.

G – Private Room – This room seats seven at the table and two in overstuffed chairs facing the fire. It is used for celebrations, as overflow when the pub is packed, and for private meetings.

9. CASTLE PUB

GROUND LEVEL



SECOND STORY



4. WELL HOUSE



5. GROUNDS KEEPER



8. CHAPEL

SANCTUARY



BELL TOWER



6. BLACKSMITH

LOFT



WORKSHOP



7. GENERAL BARRACKS

GROUND LEVEL



SECOND STORY



BRYTHA CASTLE COMPLEX

Castle Brytha – Sublevel and Cultist Temple

1 – Stairs – These stairs connect the west wing of the ground floor to the sublevel.

2, 3, 4, and 5 – Corridors – These well-traveled stone floors encircle the central group of rooms.

6 – Corridor – These well-traveled stone floors encircle the rooms on the east side of the sublevel.

7 – Book Intake – When a book is brought to the sublevel for repair or other problems, it is documented here and assessed a severity by two book monks who are stationed here. They are a liaison between the monks who do the repairs and the staff who bring in books to the book monks. Books are also processed for return in this area. These monks are also responsible for making copies of the books sent by the Formene each year and distributing them to the other four kingdoms.

8 – Book Storage – Books to be repaired are stored here until a book monk is available to work on it. About two hundred books are stored here at any given time. The room is enchanted to be cold, dry, and pest free.

9 – Ante Room – This area holds some supplies for the head monk and the intake monks as well as records of the books that the monks have serviced.

10 – Office of the Head Book Monk – The supervisor of the book monks uses this room as his office. That is the head cultist, Monder Balley, uses this room to develop the cult's goals and to study the books on Hastur that Szordree located for him.

11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 – Each of these study rooms are occupied by two cultists who work repairing books for the city and private libraries of the duke. Most of the time, they are studying works of Hastur. An INTELLIGENCE check is required to sense anything is off with them.

20 – Break Area – The cultists, disguised as book monks, take meals and breaks here.

21, 22 – Storage Rooms – These two rooms hold supplies for book restoration, copying, and preservation. The cultists also hide their materials and supplies in these rooms. Since they infiltrated the castle, they are the only ones on this level with the exception of the scullery staff and maids who bring trash down here for disposal in Area 27.

23 – Stairs – These stairs lead down to the antechamber of the castle vault. The door is locked and trapped both mechanically and magically (Normal difficulty to detect and disarm the mechanical trap. Dispel magic will disarm the magical trap).

24 – Castle Vault Antechamber – This room is guarded by an iron golem. Without the password (which can be obtained only from Count Gylip), it will attack anyone

who descends past the second highest stair.

25 – Vault – This vault contains most of the money wealth of Castle Brytha. The chests contain jewelry worth approximately five hundred thousand gold pieces, gems worth over one million gold pieces, and mixed platinum, gold, and silver coins totaling over six hundred thousand gold pieces.

26 – Hallway – This long hallway has racks holding spare weapons. It also leads to the waste disposal well.

27 – Waste Well – This room contains a well. The well shaft descends one hundred feet to a small *sphere of annihilation*. This sphere is used for waste disposal as the sphere will absorb and destroy anything that touches it.

28 – Hallway – This long hallway is lined with shelves holding spare bed linens and simple clothes. They are used when a titled guest arrives in a destitute state and has nothing but bloody rags to wear. They will do until suitable clothing can be obtained or made for the recovering guest.

29 – Storage Room – This room holds crates of art: paintings and sculptures. The stack of barrels against the south wall includes a hollow five-foot diameter tun for wine. It is a secret door connecting to a forgotten tunnel that connects the sublevel to the chapel. The cultists found this and use it to come and go from the temple undetected.

30 – Secret Door – The end of this corridor hides a secret door.

31 – Stairs – These stairs link the secret door at Area 30 to the temple floor at Area 32.

32 – Temple Floor – The ground here is littered with a loam of crushed bones that resemble pea gravel.

33 – Cultist Circle and Statue of Hastur – The circle is rimmed by braziers with a heady incense. The statue body is complete. The head is sitting 90% complete to the right of the statue. A pair of stone masons are working on the head in this room.

The statue can be destroyed by the spell **destroy stone** (See DNH2 or DNH3), toppling it from the efforts of four party members (or enlisted help from the castle staff), or any other means the players come up with that seems reasonable. Once destroyed, a blue and black floating sphere rises from the center of the statue remains, growing for a few seconds, then a blast of light envelops the room and the party members find themselves in a room with a pitch-black floor and walls of swirling blue and black like the ball. They have been sucked into Carcosa, Hastur's private demi-plane of madness.

For investigating the temple, destroying the statue, and defeating Hastur, each party member earns 4,000 experience points.

CASTLE BRYTHA

SUBLEVEL DUNGEON & CULT TEMPLE



Castle Brytha - Dungeon Level. Cartographer: Justin Andrew Mason

Bestiary

Cultist (Including Monder Balley)

- **Hit Dice:** 6
- **Armor Class:** 4 [15]
- **Attacks:** 2 piercing attacks (1d8+2)
- **Saving Throw:** 11
- **Special:** cause serious wounds x2, passwall
- **Move:** 12
- **Alignment:** Chaos
- **Challenge Level/XP:** 7/600

When cornered, a cultist uses cause serious wounds up to two times per day. A cultist can employ passwall (as per the spell) once per day.

Guards

- **Hit Dice:** 5
- **Armor Class:** 8 [11]
- **Attacks:** 2 weapon attacks (1d8)
- **Saving Throw:** 12
- **Move:** 12
- **Alignment:** Neutrality
- **Challenge Level/XP:** 5/240

Guards call for aid when one of them reaches half health, or they become outnumbered. GM determines if and when aid arrives.

Sadon Truegust

- **Hit Dice:** 6
- **Armor Class:** 5 [14] or 4 [15] with shield
- **Attacks:** 3 weapons (1d8)
- **Saving Throw:** 12
- **Special:** Immune to magic
- **Move:** 12
- **Alignment:** Neutrality
- **Challenge Level/XP:** 6/400

Sadon uses a long sword. A shield is nearby, he must make a **DEXTERITY** (16) check to retrieve it.

Smuggler

- **Hit Dice:** 2
- **Armor Class:** 4 [15]
- **Attack:** Shortsword (1d6+1) and dagger (1d4+1)
- **Saving Throw:** 16
- **Move:** 12
- **Alignment:** Chaos
- **Challenge Level/XP:** 2/30

Stone Golem (Flagstone Golem)

- **Hit Dice:** 9 (50 hit points)
- **Armor Class:** 5 [14]
- **Attacks:** 2 fists (2d8)
- **Saving Throw:** 6
- **Special:** Hit only by magic weapons, immune to most spells
- **Move:** 8
- **Alignment:** Neutrality
- **Challenge Level/XP:** 12/2,000

A flagstone golem is composed of large flat stones and bricks jointed and fitted together so as to allow the creature to fold itself flat. A flagstone golem stands 10 feet tall and weighs 1,200 pounds. Spells that affect rock are the only ones that affect flagstone golems. Any energy-based (acid, fire, cold, electricity) attack that directly effects a flagstone golem is absorbed into its body dealing no damage. A flagstone golem can use the absorbed energy to repair itself, healing 1 hit point for every 3 points of damage the attack would have otherwise dealt. Or it can release the energy in a 30-foot cone that deals 3d8 points of damage to all within the area. An opponent can save to reduce the damage by half.

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Students

- **Hit Dice:** 2
- **Armor Class:** 7 [12]
- **Attack:** 2 weapon (1d8 + 1)
- **Saving Throw:** 16
- **Move:** 12
- **Alignment:** Chaos
- **Challenge Level/XP:** 4/120

Szordree

- **Hit Dice:** 12+1d6
- **Armor Class:** 3 [16]
- **Attacks:** 2 weapon (1d8 +2)
- **Saving Throw:** 3
- **Special:** Spell-like abilities, magic resistance 75%
- **Move:** 12
- **Alignment:** Neutrality
- **Challenge Level/XP:** 13/2,300

Innate Spellcasting. It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components.

At will: detect thoughts, levitate, hypnotic pattern

1/day each: dominate monster, dominate person, plane shift (self only)

Spellcasting. The brain drinker has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): blade ward, dancing lights, mage hand, shocking grasp

1st level (4 slots): detect magic, disguise self, shield, sleep

2nd level (3 slots): blur, invisibility, ray of enfeeblement

3rd level (3 slots): clairvoyance, lightning bolt, sending

4th level (3 slots): confusion, dimension door

5th level (2 slots): telekinesis, wall of force

Actions

Tentacles (2d10 + 5). If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled and stunned until this grapple ends.

Brain Drink. Incapacitated humanoid is grappled by the brain drinker. (8d10). If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the brain drinker kills the target by sliding its tongue into the nose or mouth, punching an opening through the soft palette, injecting digestive fluids, and feasting on the target's liquid brain.

Stunning Pulse. (4d8 +5) The brain drinker emits a wave of mind rending power in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the area may save vs spells for half damage.

Enslave (1/Day). The brain drinker targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must succeed a saving throw or be charmed by the brain drinker until the brain drinker dies, it voluntarily releases the target, or until it is on a different plane of existence from the target. The charmed target is under the brain drinker's control and cannot take reactions. The brain drinker and the target can communicate telepathically with each other over any distance.

Whenever the charmed target takes damage, the target can repeat the saving throw. On a success, the effect ends. No more than once every 24 hours, the target can also repeat the saving throw when it is at least 1 mile away from the brain drinker.

Description

Szordree looks like a vole's head on a humanoid body. With large red eyes, light grey mottled skin, and a full head of hair, were it not for the dozen tentacles hanging from his cheeks, he might be mistaken for a fat, ugly elf. He has a long, barbed tongue that, once he seizes a victim's face with his tentacles, can punch a hole through the soft palette into the brain and inject a pint of digestive fluids. After a few minutes, he drinks the brain through the victim's mouth.

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About two millennia ago, Hastur nearly conquered the continent of Barestir before being defeated by a coalition army of humans, elves, dwarves, gnomes and halflings.

Since being cast from the world of Tumunzar late in the First Age of Man, Hastur has long sought to return. The elves of the Barestir continent offer an opportunity for Hastur to maintain an aspect indefinitely on Tumunzar.

Someone in Meawold is working to build a temple, build a host and pull an aspect of Hastur across from the beyond, where the Old Ones wait and plot their dreams of feasting on worlds. The Formene Elves detect this activity and ask the party members to investigate.

They are given a list of people who have the ways and means to build a cult or are acting suspicious and asked to investigate, confront, and find the person or persons involved in this horrible plan.